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WORLD CONFERENCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Preparatory Committee
Fourth session
Geneva, 19-30 April 1993
Agenda item 6

REPORT ON OTHER MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

Contribution from Rights and Humanity

1. The General Assembly, by its resolution 46/116, requested the Secretary-General to report to the Preparatory Committee on progress made on meetings that had been organized under the auspices of the United Nations programme pursuant to General Assembly resolution 45/155.

2. By letter dated 23 April 1993, the Chair of the International Board of the International Movement of Rights and Humanity requested that the recommendations of the Rights and Humanity Round Table on Strengthening Commitment to the Universality of Human Rights be circulated at the fourth session of the Preparatory Committee.

3. The Round Table was convened at Amman from 5-7 April 1993 as a satellite meeting of the World conference. It was attended by 32 participants representing different groups and organizations from all over the world. The purpose of the meeting was to reaffirm the universality of human rights and to promote a positive approach to human rights which more fully reflected the humanitarian values of the world's diverse faiths and cultures.

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RIGHTS AND HUMANITY ROUND TABLE

STRENGTHENING COMMITMENT TO THE UNIVERSALITY OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Amman, Jordan 5-7 April 1993

The Rights and Humanity Round Table on Strengthening Commitment to the Universality of Human Rights brought together thirty-two participants from diverse faiths and cultures. The participants came from eighteen countries and all continents. The Round Table, meeting in Amman, made recommendations to the World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna, June 1993, concerning the principle of the universality of human rights and strategies to strengthen commitment to this principle.

The Participants reaffirmed the principle of the universality of human rights whereby every person is seen as unique and whereby all peoples live in an inter-dependent world. Their discussions were set in the context of the need to address the economic inequalities between and within states, and being in the Year of Indigenous Peoples, gave particular consideration to the rights of indigenous peoples.

The participants of the Round Table recommended that the World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna, June 1993, include the following text in its final document:

> "The World Conference reaffirms the principles of the universality of human rights and their inter-relationship and indivisibility.
>
> It recognises that the principles on which human rights are based are universal in their origin. Human rights are universal in that they are possessed by all members of the human family. They derive from the inherent and equal dignity of all people.

In many places throughout the world and in many times throughout history the belief in human dignity and rights has been asserted by people of diverse faiths and cultures and upheld by their religious and moral principles, codes and norms. At the international level these principles have found expression in the UN Charter, the International Bill of Rights and other human rights instruments. These should not be regarded as complete, nor as a static codification of human rights, but need effective implementation and constant enhancement.

The universality of human rights is not a static concept, and allows for the changing needs and aspirations of all people - individuals, families, communities and peoples. All people have a significant contribution to make to the understanding, definition and implementation of human rights and to their further elaboration. The principle of universality means that all people without exception or discrimination are entitled to the enjoyment of human rights whether or not their governments recognise or respect such rights.

The significance of universality has been confirmed by the insistence by many peoples and groups that their voice should not be excluded from human rights discourse. The principle of universality legitimates human rights claims by people throughout the world.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS ON UNIVERSALITY:

1. The World Conference recommends that the principle of the universality of human rights be understood to include the following:-
   i) all people, including the marginalised, excluded and disadvantaged, are bearers of human rights;
   ii) the principle of universality requires recognition

that indigenous peoples are members of the human family in every sense;

iii) international human rights codes should reflect the totality of human experience;

iv) the universality of human rights requires respect for the diversity of faiths and cultures;

v) human rights are inter-related and indivisible and their universality require that equal importance be given to economic, social and cultural rights on the one hand and civil and political rights on the other, as expressed in the UN Covenants;

vi) the universality of human rights requires that every state throughout the world recognise, protect, respect and promote internationally recognised human rights standards, whatever the state's level of economic or political development, whilst not imposing on states any specific political, legal, social or cultural model;

vii) the universality of human rights requires that, in the consideration of human rights, an even-handed approach should be adopted;

viii) the universality of human rights further requires that human rights standards be objectively and non-selectively applied;

ix) the principle of universality imposes on all governments, social groups and individuals the obligation and responsibility to respect the human rights of all people everywhere;

x) the principle of universality of human rights also imposes responsibility for the rights of future generations.

2. In order to strengthen commitment to the universality of human rights the World Conference recommends that:

i) dialogue towards strengthening universal commitment to human rights should be extended among peoples of diverse faiths and cultures in cooperation with human rights bodies;

ii) all appropriate steps should be taken to ensure to indigenous peoples and groups presently marginalised or excluded, full opportunities for effective participation and contribution in the continuing elaboration and implementation of human rights;

iii) greater priority should be given to ensuring the implementation of economic, social and cultural rights;

iv) the resources of the UN Centre for Human Rights should be strengthened, particularly to ensure the implementation of economic, social and cultural rights;

v) effective criteria should be developed and implemented to ensure the protection of human rights in the field of international development cooperation;

vi) the consequences of the imposition of aid conditionalities should be fully analysed and addressed in light of human rights;

vii) formal and non-formal education and training in human rights should be expanded;

viii) human rights NGOs and community based organisations should be strengthened to play their full part in the development of civil society and the universal realisation of human rights.

The participants made further recommendations to the international community and to regional, national and local bodies and to individuals as follows:-

1. Strengthening commitment to the concept and values of the universality of human rights

(a) It is recommended that dialogue be developed and deepened among all peoples of diverse faiths, cultures and ideologies concerning the spiritual, philosophical and societal roots of beliefs and practices affecting human rights.

(b) It is recommended that religions, cultures and traditions of all peoples should be seen, not only in an historical perspective, but as living and dynamic contributors to peace, justice and human rights.

(c) It is recommended that, with respect to the above two recommendations, the diversity of indigenous peoples be recognised.

(d) It is recommended that human rights lawyers, political theorists, theologians, philosophers and other thinkers involved in the field of human rights, should further examine the principle of universality, the equal enjoyment of rights, and the need for objectivity and non-selectivity.

2. Strengthening codes, institutions and initiatives which uphold the universality of human rights

(a) It is recommended that human rights instruments should be fully implemented and kept under constant review; that international standards should be further elaborated and strengthened in response to the rapidly changing contexts of the world; and that these standards should be raised and never lowered.

(b) It is recommended that formal and non-formal education and training which help to motivate, inform and train people

in the defense of human rights, should be strengthened.

(c) It is recommended that the participation and contribution of indigenous peoples should be ensured in the formulation of legal standards.

(d) It is recommended that Rights and Humanity look further at the responsibilities imposed by human rights, and develop consensus on international humanitarian ethics.

3. Strengthening the political processes which safeguard the universality of human rights

(a) It is recommended that rights and claims to self-determination should be urgently examined.

(b) It is recommended that it be affirmed that indigenous peoples have all human rights including the right to self-determination, recognising that this right can be manifested in various forms.

(c) It is recommended that the human rights aspects of population transfer be examined, with a view to ensuring that, where such transfers violate human rights, they are condemned, and appropriate steps taken to rectify them.

(d) It is recommended that the rights of national, ethnic, cultural and religious minorities be recognised and adequately protected, and that their contributions be cherished in terms of their experience, perceptions and aspirations.

Rights and Humanity Round Table
Amman, Jordan
5-7 April 1993